

Veterans' Day 2004

On November 11, 1921, an unnamed, unknown American Soldier was buried in Arlington National Cemetery. The site of his grave overlooked the Potomac River and the city of Washington. Similar ceremonies took place in England at Westminster Abbey and in France at the Arc de Triomphe, as each nation buried one of its war dead in a place of highest honor.

Had World War I truly been the “war to end all wars,” the name of that commemorative day might have remained Armistice Day. But, by 1933 Fascism was on the rise in Germany and by 1939, Poland had fallen and war had come again to Europe.

Sixteen and one-half million Americans took part in World War II; 470,000 of them died; more than 292,000 in battle. In 1954, President Eisenhower officially changed the name of the holiday to Veterans' Day. In 1968, Congress moved the Veterans' Day commemoration to the fourth Monday in October, but November 11 had such significance to so many, that in 1978, Congress returned the celebration to the original date.

For over 80 years, we've gathered on November 11th to remember the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coastguardsmen and Civilians of our Armed Forces – to pay our respects and to convey a simple, but heart-felt message – **“Thanks to each of you for your service, devotion and sacrifice in the defense of our great Nation and pluralistic, free way of life.”**

This year's commemoration holds special significance for every INSCOM member. We remain an Army and Nation engaged in the 4th year of a Global War on Terrorism -- a conflict unlike any we have experienced in the past, against an enemy who seeks to destroy our free, democratic society and impose a hateful, repressive totalitarianism inimical to our open way of life.

INSCOM Soldiers and Civilians have performed magnificently to confront this evil on battlefields across the globe. Intelligence is the key to “winning” this war on our own terms -- we still have much hard work to do. It will require each of us to rededicate ourselves to the challenges ahead, lead in the process of intelligence transformation in order to provide better and more “actionable intelligence” to our maneuver forces, and take special care of each other and our families.

Today, on Veterans' Day 2004, we pause to remember with gratitude the courage and selfless service of America's Veterans across each of the Services. Many Veterans are still within our ranks and deployed today in harm's way; others continue to serve as American Citizens across our communities in ways that make this great Country so special. Together, we're an unbeatable force that continues to make the world a better and safer place.

Thanks to each of you for all you do each day -- God bless America!

Regards,
JFK